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Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 13 April 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Today, I write to bring to your attention the critical plight of the thousands of Palestinian civilians being held captive in jails and detention centres of Israel, the occupying Power.

On Monday, 17 April 2017, Palestinians all over the world, including those living in the occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, will observe Prisoners' Day in solidarity with the more than 6,500 Palestinians, including 53 women and 300 children, currently imprisoned by Israel, among them nearly 700 who are being held in administrative detention without charge. These Palestinians are among the more than 800,000 Palestinians, including children, kidnapped and imprisoned by the occupying Power across the 50 years of occupation since 1967 in its near-daily military raids and arrest and detention campaigns, targeting the entire population, men, women and children, with male youth especially vulnerable. Regrettably, Israel's arrest campaigns have intensified in the past two years and continue unabated, effectively turning every part of Palestine into some form of prison, detention camp or interrogation facility.

The horrendous and deplorable conditions of Israeli captivity, which threaten the well-being, safety and lives of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, are by now well known and well documented by international human rights organizations, including Israeli organizations. Day in and day out, Palestinian prisoners and detainees are subjected to various forms of physical and psychological abuse by the occupying forces. They are forced to live in unsanitary, unhygienic conditions and are routinely deprived of their right to education and health care, as well as repeatedly denied family visits and access to legal aid. Moreover, forced interrogations, violent beatings, solitary confinement, humiliation, threats to themselves or their family members and the widespread use of other forms of torture continue with impunity.

This year, in an effort to draw attention to the plight of the Palestinian prisoners, hundreds of Palestinian prisoners have pledged to go on hunger strike in

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observance of Prisoners' Day, which will be led by the imprisoned Palestinian leader, Marwan Barghouti, who is also a member of the Fatah Central Committee and an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Thus far, over 1,600 Palestinian prisoners from across the political spectrum have committed to take part in the open-ended hunger strike to protest the inhumane, oppressive Israeli measures that continue to deprive them of their basic human rights.

While the hunger strike aims to highlight and expose many of the illegal, abusive Israeli practices mentioned above, it also strives to ensure that the most basic rights and requests of the prisoners and detainees are attained. Some of their specific demands include additional family visits, as well as visits that are 30 minutes longer in duration. They are requesting the right to take photos with their family members every three months and to be allowed visits by their children and grandchildren who are under the age of 16. Moreover, given that their right to education and health care continues to be denied and violated, they are specifically requesting for routine medical exams to be conducted, timely surgery for those in need and the release of prisoners or detainees with disabilities or life-threatening illnesses. There are also other basic demands, such as the use of books and the right to study and take exams that will allow them to pursue or receive an education, which is so essential for their future and the future of our society and country.

In the light of the grave violations of the rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees that continue to be perpetrated by the occupying Power, as we approach Prisoners' Day, we renew our call on the international community to call on Israel to release the thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and elected officials, whom it is illegally and inhumanely imprisoning and detaining. Moreover, the international community must act to compel Israel's compliance with international law, including humanitarian law, specifically article 76 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which clearly defines the rights of protected persons faced with detention by an occupying Power.

As the marking of 50 years of Israel's occupation of our people and land is nearing, we reiterate our appeal to all members of the international community to make their voices heard loud and clear to the occupying Power, that its violations against our people will not be tolerated and must be immediately halted and that continued impunity will be met with accountability. In this regard, the world's support for the prisoners' hunger strike, a peaceful, non-violent measure of protest against Israel's extreme abuse, is justified and a step in the right direction.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 608 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 31 March 2017 (A/ES-10/748-S/2017/275), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 24 April 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach herewith a letter written by Palestinian leader and parliamentarian, Marwan Barghouti, who is leading the largest hunger strike by more than 1,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in the prisons of Israel, the occupying Power (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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Annex to the identical letters dated 24 April 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Letter from imprisoned Palestinian leader and parliamentarian Marwan Barghouti to his fellow parliamentarians around the world on the "Freedom & Dignity" hunger strike

Dear fellow parliamentarians,

If you are receiving this letter, it means that Israel has chosen to continue down the path of prohibited collective punishment and incitement against Palestinian prisoners rather than meeting their legitimate demands. It means that I was placed yet again in solitary confinement along with fellow hunger strikers. But we will not be silenced or surrender.

The hunger strike is a legitimate and peaceful means to protest the violations of our basic human rights as prisoners, as guaranteed under international law. Palestinian prisoners may be at the mercy of the occupying Power, and that is why they are protected under international humanitarian law; but they are not powerless. We resorted to this hunger strike after months of efforts to have our legitimate demands addressed. These demands concern the mass arbitrary arrest of Palestinians, torture and ill-treatment, punitive measures against prisoners, deliberate medical neglect and denial of family visits and contacts with our loved ones and education. These are human rights in their most basic form.

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I salute your solidarity with your imprisoned Palestinian colleagues and the strong support of parliaments around the world for the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, and for the end of the occupation and the achievement of just and lasting peace based on international law.

I was the first parliamentarian to be arrested in 2002. Since then, Israel has arrested 70 parliamentarians, more than half of the Palestinian Legislative Council; 13 remain imprisoned today. This is an insult to parliamentarians everywhere, to democracy everywhere and to human rights everywhere. This is an insult to freedom and justice, and it must be answered.

The fate of Palestinian parliamentarians is a reflection of the fate of the people they represent. For over 50 years, Israel, the occupying Power, has arrested hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, the equivalent of 40 per cent of the male population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; 6,500 languish in Israeli jails today. For Israel, we are all guilty and our unspoken charges are that we desire freedom, are hungry for freedom and strive and sacrifice for freedom.

Israeli laws authorize colonialism, collective punishment, discrimination and apartheid. Shouldn't those who vote in favour of such laws be held accountable? Some Israeli parliamentarians have advocated our arrest. They are sitting among you, while we are unable to.

As for the Israeli courts, they are part and parcel of this colonial and military occupation, which aims at annexing our land and further displacing and replacing our people. Israeli military courts have a conviction rate for Palestinians that has ranged in recent years between 90 and 99 per cent, while Israelis committing crimes against Palestinians enjoy near absolute impunity. I say it yet again: this is a judicial apartheid whereby Palestinian existence and resistance is criminalized.

I was convicted by one of these illegitimate courts. I refused to recognize the court, even more so as an elected representative of the occupied people. I was sentenced to 5 life sentences and 40 years by the occupying Power's courts for terrorism, in what was denounced unanimously by international observers as a political show trial. Not a single country on earth accepted this verdict. This has been the fate of the leaders of liberation movements around the world and across history. The Rivonia trial, which condemned Mandela to a life sentence, did not delegitimize him or his struggle; it only further delegitimized the apartheid regime prosecuting him.

This is why the companion of Nelson Mandela and anti-apartheid icon Ahmed Kathrada launched the "Free Marwan Barghouti and all Palestinian Prisoners International Campaign", just as he had launched the "Free Mandela Campaign" before spending 26 years in apartheid jails himself. This is why he launched it from the cell of Nelson Mandela on Robben Island. This is why 8 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, 120 Governments and hundreds of parliamentarians, leaders, academics, artists, intellectuals and civil society organizations have joined the campaign. This is why two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, parliaments and parliamentarians have nominated me for the Nobel Peace Prize as an expression of support for the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom.

Palestinian prisoners have always suffered from injustice and violations of their rights. But in recent years, Israeli occupation authorities have even deprived us of rights acquired through prior hunger strikes. The escalation in punitive and inhumane measures against prisoners and their loved ones could not remain unanswered. We decided to go on hunger strike because we were left with no other choice. Palestinians suffer and sacrifice to be able to enjoy the rights they are entitled to and yet deprived of. Palestinian prisoners are no exception.

We have named this hunger strike "Freedom & Dignity". These are words that resonate deeply in the hearts of our nation, which has been struggling for 70 years for their realization. But they are also words that resonate around the world, as part of universal history and the struggle against all forms of oppression and servitude. They are values that are at the core of humanity and that are indispensable to the achievement of peace. There is no peace possible between the oppressor and the oppressed, as oppression and peace are mutually exclusive. There is no peace possible between the prisoner and the jailer. Freedom is the way to peace.

I call on you to speak up for those that Israel is trying to silence. I call on you to stand up for those thrown into dark cells to be forgotten. I call on you to support the legitimate demands of the Palestinian prisoners' movement and to uphold international law. I call on you to support the freedom and dignity of the Palestinian people, so peace can prevail.

Some may believe that this is the end of the story, and that I will perish here in solitary confinement. But I know, even in this forced solitude, that we are not alone. I know that millions of Palestinians and many more around the world stand with us. We shall meet soon, in freedom.

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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 28 April 2017 from the Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Regrettably, conditions in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, continue to deteriorate and tensions continue to rise, as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its illegal practices, in breach of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, causing hardships and suffering to the Palestinian civilian population and undermining the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian territory.

Yet another provocative announcement was made this week by the Israeli Housing Ministry regarding plans for the illegal construction of more Israeli settlements on our land. This includes the decision by the so-called "Jerusalem Municipality" to advance a plan to build approximately 10,000 settlement units on land belonging to the Palestinian village of Qalandiya. Further plans reported include the expropriation of more Palestinian land in Ra's al-Amud in Occupied East Jerusalem to build a so-called information and visitor centre to serve the Jewish cemetery adjacent to Al-Aqsa mosque compound; a plan to expand the "Shilo" settlement to accommodate settlers evacuated from the "Amona" settlement that was built on private Palestinian land; and the establishment of a new settlement installation near the "Adam" settlement north-east of East Jerusalem.

Such announcements and the actual advancement of these plans are being made in grave breach of international law, in direct violation of relevant United Nations resolutions, and in deliberate contempt of the international community. Israel's disrespect for the Security Council in particular is glaring, especially in the wake of the unanimous adoption by the Council of resolution 2334 (2016), which, inter alia, unequivocally called for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and for respect by Israel of its legal obligations.

As Israel blatantly dismisses and defies the Security Council and its authoritative decisions, preferring instead to persist with its systematic settlement

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colonization schemes, it is damaging the Council's credibility and making a mockery of the rule of law and international norms. Such illegal actions also further obstruct and undermine the prospects for a peaceful and just solution in accordance with the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines, also as called for in resolution 2334 (2016) and as reflected in the long-standing international consensus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a consensus that was again clearly reaffirmed in the Council debate of 20 April 2017 on this matter. Moreover, such actions totally fly in the face of efforts by concerned regional and international partners to revive a political horizon for peace negotiations to achieve that solution.

Israel must be held accountable for its violations before it completely sabotages the chances for peace and stability. The Security Council in particular has a duty to insist on and pursue the implementation of its own resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and to demand compliance with its provisions without exception. The Palestinian Government has committed itself to respecting resolution 2334 (2016) and will continue to cooperate for the achievement of the resolution's ultimate objectives of promoting an end to the occupation and realizing a just, lasting and comprehensive solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. If Israel, the occupying Power, persists with such actions, flouting the law and destroying the two-State solution, it must be the party held responsible for the failure of this globally endorsed vision for peace and its consequences.

Today, we must also highlight, once again, the critical issue of the 1,600 Palestinian prisoners who have been on hunger strike since 17 April 2017 in protest of the inhumane measures they are being subjected to in Israeli captivity, in violation of their basic rights and dignity. Through this peaceful, non-violent hunger strike — the "Freedom and Dignity" strike, now in its twelfth day — they seek to call attention to the plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and to have their appeals heard for more humane treatment, in line with international humanitarian and human rights law. But their peaceful appeals have been met with a typical punitive response by Israel, which is determined to crush any expression of rejection of the occupation and its illegal practices. Although many of the striking prisoners are now suffering declining health and illness, rather than address their requests, Israel has decided to intensify its ill-treatment of the hunger strikers, including by means of solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, separation and withdrawal of the salt the prisoners had been taking with water since the strike began. Incitement against the prisoners by Israeli leaders has also been rampant, with one Israeli minister declaring that the Government should be firm, "even if it means letting prisoners die".

As the situation worsens, tensions are rising in communities all across Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Protests have been held in Palestinian cities and towns in solidarity with the hunger strikers and all Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including by children, women, men and elected officials. Public sympathy with their plight is strong, as are the calls for an end to the suffering and injustice they and their families are enduring. Regrettably, however, Israeli occupying forces, disregarding the high sensitivities on the matter, which has affected nearly every Palestinian family under occupation, have confronted protesters with excessive force, with over 50 protesters injured as a result of tear gas inhalation and some shot with live or rubber bullets. We appeal to the international community to support the prisoners' hunger strike and to insist on Israel's respect for international law, specifically article 76 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which defines the rights of protected persons faced with detention by an occupying Power.

We renew our call today for the international community's urgent attention to the ongoing critical situation in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Clear demands must be made for Israel, the occupying Power, to respect its obligations under international law and comply with United Nations resolutions, or face accountability. The future prospects for Palestinian-Israeli peace and security, as well as regional peace, are dependent upon this.

This letter is in follow-up to our 609 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 April 2017 (A/ES-10/749-S/2017/325), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Charge d'affaires a.i.